

"I Like Judy Collins' Voice"



Photo by Bruce Menozzi

by Penny Peterson

Miss Collins, backstage

There is something special about Judy Collins' voice that comes in and gets me inside where I live. I'm thinking that its the way she has of making notes so pure. People like that pureness and the way it comes so smoothly and turns into some song. She honestly wants to sing out for them.

Sing for us she did, keeping the first set on the folk, rocky, bluesy side always handling the songs with the delicate manner that is Judy Collins. She sang "Suzanne" and got her first hold on the audience, following up with "Daddy You've Been On My Mind" and just to be sure that we were her audience she sang Richard Farina's "Pack Up Your Sorrows" and got us to sing. She finished the set with the Colombe song (I can't read her writing of the whole title) but you can probably remember how dramatic it was. I can just remember sitting there after it was over thinking it was so good I'd forgotten to clap. I wanted to clap the house down.

However I have to be a little bit critical too. The only thing I can say is that her guitar playing was on the unpracticed side, she wasn't hitting the notes clean and she wasn't in very good control of the Guild twelve she was using.

There were also some technical problems, the worst of those being the amplification system. The rattling speaker set up is Drew's and not Hers and to say the least nobody backstage was very pleased about it. I just hope the people in back could hear the volume could not be turned any louder because of the rattling which increased. As it was, it bordered on being whatever is often very annoying.

During her break she went directly upstairs where I imagine she had a drink (coke?). She came downstairs and tuned up the D-17 Martin while Rosco of WOR-FM was introducing her again. She didn't say a word except to worry over one of the songs being too repetitious in the last set, referring to her accompaniment. She hadn't practiced much with the piano player (whose name I forget) and she was worried that he was having a hard time since she wasn't being very formal with her guitar back-up and since he couldn't see her as she played.

On the whole he was doing very well. His piano is not at all unlike Bruce Langhorn's guitar in the way he flourishes and adds the beautiful complications to her songs. Langhorn has gone to the West Coast after backing Collins (and everybody else out here) for about a year. Her piano man however will be working just as well, as soon as they've worked together for a while. This was their first concert on the college tour and they've plenty of time. Bill Lee, on the bass, one of her usual back-up men performed consistently here all night.

She started the second set with "Early Morning Rain" and after two more songs she sat down to the piano to do two of her own compositions. She has just started writing her own material and it looks like this is the direction she wants to go in. She's awfully excited about writing and she said something that indicated she'd love to go writing for just about forever some seven or so million songs that she could sing for us. Her songs were dramatic and sad (her words) and it looks to me like she's got something in her that's going to come out with the kind of love songs that just can't help from being modern blues. Anyway she went back to the guitar with Eric Anderson's "Thirsty Boots" followed by "Mr. Tamborine Man" and you gotta know that was good. She changed some of Dylan's words and so what she sang was her song. Everybody liked it, and everybody showed it and it was something good to be with a responding audience. Her next song was a special arrangement of "IN MY Life." That, I think, was the best song of the evening demonstrating good rhythm, her beautiful voice and excellent back-up. She contrasted that with her next song, "Hard Lovin' Loser,"

much more happy in its mood and left the stage with a heavy ovation. She came back for an encore and was then applauded back for another. She let go and that was good. She left and returned to take a bow for the standing ovation that followed. She was glad, anybody could tell. In those last fifteen minutes she gave a great concert; the rest was good, but the end was great.

Backstage, God and all the teenyboppers were there. She signed autographs and had the patience of Job with all the questions and handshakings and "I liked your concert". She was gracious and happy and I think she even liked what she was doing though she was tired and wanted to get changed. She did an interview with WERD which I hope a lot of people will hear. She said that she's working on an album of love songs which will be out

when its finished. I guess that's either in three or four months or never. She left to change and everyone left except me and a few other people who were supposed to be there like the photographer lady who's working on the photo-story book of Judy that they'll sell at concerts. You ought to get one if you can. I mean you'll probably get several pictures of her in our own Baldwin Gymnasium (you should have seen the Juliet poses on the winding staircase backstage). After a bit she came down and talked with me for a few minutes. So what can I say, she was tired, hoarse, and awful happy, we were a good audience. She had been nervous at first since she didn't feel rested to begin with but said she knew she was all right when we started to respond. What can I say, she's human, wears cowboy boots, and left with a guy who had long hair.



Photo by Bruce Menozzi

John Toder of WERD records reactions of Judy Collins to questions as he catches interview for campus radio station. Miss Collins stayed backstage accepting congratulations and talking for nearly an hour after her performance. Despite this, several people backstage for the entire concert noted that she seemed to play the prima donna.

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